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# Two Stories: Yaqui Resistance in Sonora and Yucatan Towards the End of the Porfiriato

Over centuries, the Sonoran Yaquis' behavior can best be described as non-conformist. The first contacts between Yaquis and Spaniards on the Pacific coast of Mexico occurred around the year 1533. The Yaquis, who call themselves *yoreme*, were originally loosely organized into scattered semi-permanent settlements, numbering approximately 80 different *rancherías*. The area they occupied was about 60 miles long and 15 miles wide on both sides of the Yaqui River, which flows from the mountains of Northwest Mexico to the Pacific. This traditional Yaqui homeland was known among them as *ýaquimi*. The primary weapons of the Yoreme were bows and arrows.

The early contacts between Yoreme and Spaniards alternated between hostility and friendship – depending on the conduct of the colonists and also on practical assessments by the Yaquis. They profited from the Habsburg's neglect of New Spain's northwest frontier. Between 1533 and 1617, the Yaquis managed to survive the sporadic encounters with the Europeans. At the time, the Yaquis probably numbered about 30,000 people (Hu-DeHart 1984: 12). In 1617 the Yoreme accepted the Jesuits among them, and the missionaries henceforth remodeled Yaqui society and gave it a rigid new cohesive structure.[1] Under Jesuit tutelage, the eighty or so formerly independent *ranchería* hamlets were transformed into eight tightly structured towns, each eventually supervised by a priest.[2] This reorganization by the *padres* was important for two reasons: first it improved local production and made the Yoreme economically self-sufficient, and secondly it gave them a heightened sense of political and cultural identity

1 For a more detailed account see Hausberger (2000: 97-100).

2 In the very beginning, however, there were only two priests (Hu-DeHart 1984: 13).

that seemed to be of vital importance in the future. For over a hundred years these arrangements seem to have worked fairly well.[3]

Still, Jesuit control was not necessarily always harmonious, as the 1740 uprising against some of the *padres* proves.[4] The uprising was a signal that the Yoreme were unwilling to accept just any treatment by the missionaries. And the now prospering frontier economy, with its mines and *haciendas* offered the Yaquis multiple opportunities to work outside of their traditional territory on the Río Yaqui, which they intended to take. Among the grievances the Yoreme' representatives uttered as early as 1736 was that they wanted to be allowed to carry their traditional weapons. They also argued against the missionaries taking away their land. And they wanted to elect their traditional authorities themselves and not be forced to accept the friars' choices in this respect. Among the many grievances stated, these are the ones to reappear again and again over the course of three centuries.[5]

After the Jesuits were expelled from Spanish America in 1767, the Yaqui communities – unlike other missions – did not fall apart. They intensified their work on *haciendas* and in mines outside of their territory, becoming an indispensable source of labor especially for the mines.[6] Although there naturally may have been disagreements among the Yoreme, they always shared one belief in questions of autonomy. In their territory there would be only Yaquis, and they always distinguished between their own government and the colonial, and later, the Mexican authority.[7] Through the application of that attitude they managed to keep outsiders from settling among them. While the Bourbon authorities attempted to extract tribute from the Yaquis, they eventually settled for their surplus labor instead, something the Yaquis gave

3 The Jesuits were not very content with the continuous coming and going of the Yaquis (Hausberger 2000: 70-71).

4 See the corresponding sections of Hausberger (2000).

5 The uprising did not last long and neither did it bring many changes. It did not establish a system of payments of tribute to colonial authorities, as the governor had suggested at one point. It showed that the Yaquis did value the exemption from tribute and the protection they received through the Jesuits.

6 They had been taking work outside of the missions before, in spite of the Jesuits who would have preferred to have the only contacts between Yaquis and Spanish colonists to be made through themselves.

7 The Yaquis wanted political as well as cultural separation (Hu-DeHart 1988: 156).

willingly. Thus, a balance was achieved between the demands of the state and the *vecinos*, and the aims and goals of the Yoreme themselves.

This fragile balance lasted through Independence (1810-1821), which extended citizenship to all Indians. This, the Yoreme did not acknowledge at all (Hu-DeHart 1984: 19). What they again claimed for themselves was the sole ownership of the Yaqui territory in one piece. They could not be coerced into paying taxes or serving in the military. If need arose, they took up arms against the Mexicans. And especially since many Yaquis had returned to their pueblos after the post-Independence decline of the mines, they were a force to be reckoned with. It took the government several years to deal with the rebellion by the Yaqui known as Juan Banderas in the 1820s and early 1830s. During this rebellion, the by then familiar demands were voiced once again. The Yaquis wanted the retreat of all troops from the Yaqui River, and to be recognized as sole and undisputed owners of their land. They insisted that the *yori*-families, the name the Yoreme used for non-Yaquis, having fled the river should not return.

It was during this time that the Yoreme first experienced deportations. Frustrated by their own inability to win, the government forces' treatment of the Yaquis taken prisoner became more and more ruthless. Many were executed on the spot, while others were sent to Mexico City. Supposedly the latter were to be tried in court for their crimes but they were really drafted into the marines of Veracruz (Hu-DeHart 1984: 29). "This was the first documented case of deportation, a punishment which was meted out sporadically during the next few decades but which became a major policy at the end of the century" (Hu-DeHart 1984: 29).

Even though Banderas was eventually arrested and executed and the Yaqui resistance subsided for a while, the problem of pacifying or reining in the Yoreme remained unsolved when Porfirio Díaz came to power in Mexico in 1876. At the time, the Yaqui resistance had already acquired a new leader, a Yaqui known as Cajeme. The government had actually sent him back to the Yaquis in yet another attempt to appease them. As it turned out, he was to do quite the contrary. Cajeme started yet another rebellion in 1875 and during this time, significant changes were introduced into Yaqui society. "Using a combination of Yaqui traditions and what he had learned from the

Mexicans, Cajeme disciplined his people to rely on their own resources, initiative and leadership, rather than to work for, pillage from, or ally with, outsiders" (Hu-DeHart 1988: 160).

Essentially, this rebellion was a defensive one, its object merely to keep the traditional territory and to strengthen and preserve Yaqui autonomy. The goals were clear and at the same time very traditional. The rebellion came at a time when Sonora was already torn over an election. "Threatening to rebel if his message was not heeded, Cajeme announced he would not recognize the government unless the Yoreme were granted total freedom to govern themselves, because they were the 'natural owners' of the Yaqui River" (Hu-DeHart 1993: 143). It was during this revolt that the Yaquis were closest to complete isolation. They hardly worked outside their territory and they did not take any allies this time. Still the Yaquis never did shut themselves off entirely since they needed the contacts to the outside, especially to obtain weapons.

The "Yaqui tradition of not isolating themselves entirely from the outside world, while claiming the right to autonomy", as Hu-DeHart (1988: 160) has termed it, created something like a state within a state, a nation within, that was unacceptable to the Porfiristas who had come to power in Sonora in 1879. Hence, they attempted both to crush the Yoreme using military means and to colonize and develop their lands. In the 1880s "Yaqui and Mayo lands were declared terrenos baldíos and, because the Indians were unable to produce recorded titles to their property, their lands were surveyed and sold" (Hatfield 1998: 7).[8] Naturally, the Yoreme did not just accept this. They were set on autonomy, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency.

The ensuing Yaqui wars lasted twelve years in spite of the serious interest and involvement of federal forces. It was hard to defeat the Yaquis under Cajeme, who was eventually apprehended and executed by a firing squad on 21 April, 1887, mainly because the territory, the Sierra de Bacatete where they went to hide, was so difficult.[9] Furthermore, the climatic conditions were very hard on people unused to

8 This declaring the lands to be *terrenos baldíos*, empty, vacant lands, was done on the basis of the so-called *Ley Lerdo*, passed in 1856, but a fair amount of land had remained untouched until Díaz came to power.

9 After having been marched through all the Yaqui pueblos, Cajeme was executed by a firing squad.

them and even on the animals used in the campaigns. Greatly superior strength was needed to finally defeat the Yaquis and the government came out of this conflict badly embarrassed in military matters. Their status as an important labor force may have saved the Yaquis from more severe measures at the time.

Even after the defeat and the death of Cajeme in 1887 the resistance of the Yaqui tribe remained solid in spite of the government's hopes of having finally pacified them. Now the Indians carried on with the battle by means of guerrilla warfare. According to the government's intention they were to keep as much of their land as they could cultivate themselves and the remainder was to be put to other uses by other people. Few Yaquis were willing to accept the option of working their traditional land as mere colonists. "The mass exodus of Yaquis that followed Cajeme's defeat amounted to a self-imposed exile that would have been acceptable to the government as a final solution to the Yaqui problem had it entailed no other consequences" (Hu-DeHart 1988: 163). Rather, in once again opting for wage labor they adapted their resistance to yet another change in the prevailing circumstances. The by now accustomed raiding and hit-and-run attacks were kept up, only now as a form of exclusive guerrilla warfare, at first under the leadership of the Yaqui Juan Maldonado, better known under his war name Tetabiate. The Yoreme who worked outside of *Yaquimi* now functioned as a base for the active resistance of the so-called *broncos*, the hard core of rebels. Although only a minority was actually involved actively in the fighting, almost every Yaqui had a part in this struggle. The so-called *pacíficos* or *mansos* supported the *broncos* and made it hard, if not impossible, for the Mexican forces to overcome the armed resistance fueled by the 'peaceful' members of the tribe. The money they made went into weapons – usually into high-calls American manufactured ones.[10] Furthermore, the rebels sometimes went to the *haciendas* to rest and recharge while former workers took their part in the fight.[11] This constant exchange

10 The border to Arizona was strictly patrolled and the Americans involved in the attempt to keep guns and ammunition from the Yaquis. See for example AHGES, tomo 1794 (1903) and 1881 (1904).

11 Rebels went to *haciendas* to recharge or switch places with the *pacíficos*. See for instance AHGES, tomo 1700 (1902) and 1794 (1903). See also various references in newspaper articles as collected in INAH, primarily in Sonora 8. See also

prevented the military from effectively isolating the rebels from the other Yoreme. In a way, almost every Yaqui was a rebel. Thus it proved to be next to impossible to dry-up the social base supporting and replenishing the rebels so that the Sonoran and the federal government in the end arrived at deportation as the only option left to them.

At some time during the campaign against the Yaquis, deportation of captured rebels was introduced as a measure.[12] This practice had been applied before if only in very few cases. Male Yaquis were taken to the South of Mexico and drafted into the army. Some women and children supposedly were sent into labor gangs (Hu-DeHart 1984: 132).

Eventually, rebel chief Tetabiate gave signs of interest in a peaceful solution of the conflict. An unconditional peace agreement was signed on May 15, 1897 at Ortiz. It proved to be short-lived, holding for only two years. But the peace of Ortiz sent over 6,000 Yaquis back to the river within the following two years. As Hu-DeHart (1984: 138) puts it, "this mass migration back to the Yaqui … poignantly illustrated the desire of Yaquis to return home after a long sojourn outside". But this happened on a set of unwritten premises like the aforementioned withdrawal of troops. And when their expectations were not met and more and more white colonists settled within their territory, the Yoreme again took up arms in July 1899, a mere two years after the signing of the peace of Ortiz. However, this time around the fighting did not go very well for the Yaquis and they suffered many losses and defeats.

The government forces came up to almost 5,000 men – greatly superior to the rebel strength. Additional measures were reintroduced or more strictly enforced than before. For instance, the *hacendados* were by law required to keep a register of their Yaqui workers and to detain all suspects of being rebels. Yaquis were only to live in designated areas. Any Yoreme was supposed to carry a passport with him, the so-called *salvoconducto*.[13] "Indios sospechosos", suspects, were kept

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CEHM CONDUMEX, Col. B. Reyes, carpeta 34, legajo 6738; and AHUIA, Col. P. Díaz, L15: Letter from Corral to Díaz, June 14, 1890.

12 According to Hu-DeHart (1984: 132) this happened between 1895 and 1897.

13 See for instance AHGES, tomo 1632 (1901) or 1700 (1902).

under surveillance.[14] Many Yaqui living quarters were searched for guns and ammunition.[15] And the deportations were stepped up.

While none of these measures managed to effect the Yaquis' surrender they did reduce the number of active rebels to about 300. In one encounter Tetabiate was killed. And while one could still not speak of a complete victory of the government forces the campaign was called off on August 31, 1901. What was thought to be a limited clean-up program aimed at 150 to 300 rebels was left to the state government of Sonora. The latter put together a surveillance program and established compulsory Yaqui registers.[16] The passport system proved ineffective since the rebels often borrowed papers or even obtained work without them. The Sonoran *hacendados* were desperate for workers and therefore even willing to break the law to get them.[17]

When these measures did not work out even after two years, the government saw its only remaining chance in drying up the social base of the rebels, concluding that without it the fighting would necessarily cease. "Moreover, it was far easier to deal with the visible, relatively stable working population than with the ghost-like rebels in the sierra" (Hu-DeHart 1984: 156) Consequently, between 1902 and 1904, several hundred Yoreme, men, women, children, were rounded up and subsequently jailed. At this time it was still official policy to deport only hardcore rebels though this was not followed strictly. Some women and children were also deported; some men hanged or sentenced to other punishments.

It was partly the commercial interest from the United States, especially from Arizona, that inspired the Mexican government to finally rid itself of the 'Yaqui nuisance' and open the way for commercial agricultural development of the area. This was so ironical because without the Yaquis and their labor the very same development would in all likelihood been much slower in taking off. Additionally, the Yaquis suffered from technical innovations, especially from the advance of railroads. At first, they were convenient for this development, supplying mines, railroads, industries, but most of all the ex-

14 See AHGES, tomo 1632 (1901).
15 See AHGES, tomo 1552 (1900).
16 See AHGES, tomo 1700 (1902).
17 See for instance the case of the Maytorenas who were caught smuggling Yaquis. See AHGES, tomo 2316 (1908).

panding agriculture, with cheap labor. But then the already mentioned need for labor on the henequen plantations counteracted the need of Yaqui labor in Sonora. The *hacendados* of the province had been willing to balance the need for the Yaqui labor force against the fear of attacks and until that point the government had agreed with that. But now they could have both; they could deport the Yoreme and at the same time satisfy labor needs – only not Sonora's.

Yet even the draconian policy of deporting the Yoreme did not bring forth the desired results. The rebels still held out and kept up their resistance. In their attempts to evade capture they roamed an even wider area than before. Raids and plunder sustained them along with what the by now severely restricted *mansos* could muster. Any attempts the Yaquis made to obtain peace failed – most likely because they still made the traditional demands.

The prisoners obtained in the campaign and its various measures were usually taken to Hermosillo and then to Guaymas to be shipped to their future destinations.[18] Most were jailed repeatedly or put into guarded camps where they awaited their fate and quite possibly their deportation from Sonora. Judging from the frequent deaths, the conditions inside the prisons must have been very harsh. By 1904 the deportations had increased very much, were an obvious threat to the tribe. In 1904 alone, the official correspondence mentions 822 Yaquis to be deported or to have been deported already.[19] In 1908, the number came up to 1198.[20] As destinations, both Yucatan and Oaxaca were given, but the former decidedly more than the latter. Infinitely more of the Yoreme may have already been sent or were supposed to go later on: They may also have been imprisoned at the time or sent somewhere to work, or were even released. And in the whole venture that removal was, the decision of who went and who stayed was not always a logical one. Some who admitted to be involved in the rebellion were let go while others, even children, were deported. And even

18 See for instance AHGES, tomos 1881 (1904), 1984 (1905), 2077 (1906), 2078 (1906), 2193 (1907), 2313 (1908), 2663 (1911).

19 See AHGES, tomos 1881 (1904) and 1882 (1904). Unfortunately, the data are not as rich in other years, except for 1908.

20 See AHGES, tomos 2313 (1908), 2314 (1908), 2315 (1908), and 2316 (1908). The above number refers to Yucatan and, in a few cases, to an unspecified destination, not to Oaxaca.

those of the Yoreme who had fought for the government were not necessarily safe from deportation. A few men were always hanged though it is impossible to tell from the source material why some were selected for this punishment and others went free. Historian Alan Knight (1986: 79) consequently has termed the fight against the Yaquis a 'crusade'.

In view of the rebels' success in still somehow eluding apprehension and castigation or deportation, the government's step to by 1907 adopt deportation as the official policy becomes almost logical (Hu-DeHart 1984: 180).[21] It is not evident from the sources available who was behind this decision or the idea behind the program.[22] However, it is startling that some areas of the project are so well documented through official governmental and military correspondence while others remain almost entirely in the dark. This is probably due to the fact that certain government officials (ab)used their positions for some kind of semi-private enterprise. They could justify the deportations to the federal government as a necessary cleanup-program while at the same time personally benefiting from sending the Yaquis to Yucatan.[23] The henequen industry on Yucatan was booming and therefore for the federal government of higher importance than the Sonoran economy.

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21 Many officials were of the opinion that only the Yaquis' elimination from Sonora could bring peace to the state. See CEHM CONDUMEX, Col. R. Corral, carpeta 1/3, legajo 30: Letter from Alberto Cubillas to Ramón Corral, September 1908.

22 Hu-DeHart (1984: 180) speaks of the "ruling elites of Sonora and Yucatan". She is referring to Olegario Molina, Ramón Corral, Luis Torres, and Rafael Izábal. Raquel Padilla Ramos (1995: 105) analyzes this further. I have found no reason to doubt their conclusions even though they do not explain why some Yaquis were sent to Oaxaca rather than to Yucatan. However, the information that can be found in the archives in Sonora and Yucatan is rather sketchy and confusing. The apprehension and the rounding up of Yaquis clearly seems to have fallen among the responsibilities assigned to various Sonoran government officials like the prefects. Troops were used to guard the captives and the latter were often kept in prisons. The official correspondence also points to a governmental involvement in the organization of the shipment of Yaquis at least to their first stopover on their way to Yucatan. See AHGES, tomos 2319 (1908), 2077/78 (1906), 2193 (1907).

23 Yucatan's henequen plantations were in constant demand of cheap labor. During the first decade of the twentieth century henequen had become one of the largest exports of Mexico and had thus made the owners of the vast plantations very influential.

The peak of these deportations may have been around the year 1908. Exact numbers are not known but it seems to be certain that thousands of Yaquis – and not only Yaquis but also other Indians were removed from their homes this way. Raquel Padilla Ramos (1995: 115-118, 130), as a preliminary estimate, mentions a number of over 6,000 Yaqui deportees to Yucatan alone.[24] Other estimates for the period between 1902 and 1908 run as high as 15,000.[25] Even assuming a population of 30,000 Yoreme on the eve of the deportations, which is one of the higher estimates, that would still mean that they lost between one-fourth and one-half of the entire Sonoran Yaqui population. And these numbers do not even include the ones who escaped over the border to the United States or those who had died. Generally the apprehension of the Yoreme seems to have been followed by their transfer into special camps or by imprisonment. They were then shipped by boat from Guyamas down the coast, marched across the width of Mexico in order to be shipped again to Yucatan, their final destination.

By 1908, the deportations had taken their final toll on the rebellion, they had removed the base that had supported the whole venture. The same year, a delegation of Yaquis approached the officials for peace – under the traditional conditions of keeping their arms while keeping intruders out. It is telling that these Yaquis were *pacíficos* and not rebels (Hu-DeHart 1984: 182). Not surprisingly the government refused these demands, but the negotiations were kept up.

Subsequently, in May of 1908, government representatives met with the rebel chieftain Luis Bule. They required complete submission to the government and disarmament. Bule accepted the conditions but also asked about the return of the Yoreme who had been deported to Yucatan.[26] Furthermore, he refused to accept any of the proposed con-

24 Her main sources are newspapers.

25 The total number of deportees from the Yaqui tribe has never been officially tabulated. Estimates for the period between 1902 and 1908 range from 8,000 to about 15,000. It is also next to impossible to estimate the total number of Yaquis at the eve of the deportation, due to wide dispersal, wars, and a generally high mobility (Tronosco 1977: 265).

26 "En seguida manifestaron que les trajeron las familias de ellos que estaban en Yucatán y se les manifestó que después de sometidos podían solicitarlo del Gobierno, el que resolvería lo conveniente, con lo que también quedaron conformes"; AHGES, tomo 2315 (1908). See Hu-DeHart (1984: 184).

ditions and he asked for time to gather the *parientes*.[27] Unfortunately, as Bule did not represent all the Yaquis, he could not convince them to surrender and so the deadline to turn over the weapons could not be met. Infuriated, the government once again enforced the deportations.[28]

The largest shipments probably took place in June and July of 1908. The only exceptions made were for small Yaqui orphans, brought up in non-Yaqui families, not speaking any Yaqui. Almost all others were pursued relentlessly. The Vice-President and the Secretary of War had decreed that all Yaquis, "sin excepción", were to be removed from Sonora.[29] In July the Secretary of War made it known to the Yaquis that for every attack 500 of them would be deported to Yucatan.[30] This was to be communicated to the *mansos* so they would relate the news to the rebels.

The massive embarkations of Yaquis stopped abruptly at the end of July but smaller numbers continued to be deported. There were also still prices on the heads of Yaquis but by the end of this month the so-called concentration of *pacíficos* was considered complete.[31] Maybe the slowdown in the deportations was due to the decrease in labor demand in Yucatan. The henequen market depended largely on export and also suffered from the depression in the United States, possibly having a beneficial effect for the Yaquis.

In late August of 1908, Bule and his second-in-command formally agreed to the peace conditions from May. But, as it turned out, once again not all his people backed Bule. And even though the initial talks seem to have gone well the Yaquis later insisted on keeping their arms, asked for guarantees for their lives and for the return of the deported *parientes*.[32] Life guarantees were given under the condition of the complete submission of the Yaquis and only a few of them were to

27 See AHGES, tomo 2315 (1908).
28 See AHGES, tomo 2316 (1908).
29 See AHGES, tomo 2316 (1908).
30 See AHGES, tomo 2315 (1908).
31 See AHGES, tomo 2315 (1908).
32 "Pidieron que se les permitiera á los que fueron deportados á Yucatán últimamente que regresaran; á esto contestó el Señor Gobernador que el regreso de los de Yucatán depende de la conducta que éstos observen aquí"; AHGES, tomo 2316 (1908). See also CEHM CONDUMEX, Col. R. Corral, carpeta 1/3, legajo 4: Letter from Alberto Cubillas, Secretarian, to Ramón Corral, May 4, 1908.

keep their weapons. They were also told that the return of the deportees depended entirely on the conduct of the Sonoran Yaquis. The government refused to make any further concessions.

In January of 1909, Luis Bule and some 180 rebels did agree to the original peace conditions and were disarmed. The deportees to Yucatan remained unmentioned. But even before the conclusion of the meeting the government representatives present had doubts about the validity of the peace agreement for the Yaquis as a tribe, since not all the rebels had come together for the occasion. They were soon to find out that they had been correct in this assumption. For the time being, however, Luis Bule and some of his men were incorporated into the government troops as a special auxiliary force. Bule seems to have honestly tried to fulfill his promises and repeatedly sent letters to the rebels still in the *sierra*. However, only occasionally did a few men come down from the mountains. Luis Espinosa, one of Bule's old comrades, commanded the last faction holding out there. But probably since the remaining rebels were few in number and did not constitute much of a problem, the troops only went after the small groups coming out of the *sierra* instead of risking a pursuit in the difficult mountainous terrain. Not much of this situation changed in 1910. Compared to previous years, the whole area did indeed appear tranquil with no one but the Espinosa faction occasionally causing trouble. The other Yoreme stayed quiet.

Apparently, the government's efforts were finally paying off. "Had it not been for the Mexican Revolution which terminated the Díaz regime in 1911, it might have succeeded in isolating the Espinosa faction from the rest of the Yaqui people, ultimately destroying it" (Hu-DeHart 1984: 197). Indeed, as early as 1910, the shadow of the revolution may have relieved the rebels a little. In the end, the Yaqui tribe was saved from complete disintegration by the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, because it enabled some of them to go back to their original homes. Still, Friedrich Katz (1991: 91) has concluded that overall the Yaquis offered the greatest resistance to Profirian modernization. They "constituted a traditional sector in the sense that they clung to their established rights and lands" (Katz 1991: 91). And they clung to these things successfully, although that also meant the forced sacrifice of some tribal members, by death or by removal.

As seen, the Yaquis almost always seemed willing to rise up for their demands. Even in times of peace, the situation was never relaxed, but there were processes of adjustment and negotiation, which often again resulted in armed conflicts. Thus over time, an uneasy balance of power developed, in which the Yaquis managed to hold their own for a long time.

In the conflicts explored, the Yaquis proved that they considered themselves to be outside of the social hierarchy envisioned by the government. It becomes evident by their steadfast attempts to resist incorporation and the taking of their lands. The latter did not meet with complete success and there were some land losses and encroachment. However, the Yaquis retained something like an autonomous space, both in a metaphorical way – their separateness and autonomy – and also in a very tangible, practical way – the territory they themselves called *Yaquimi*. But this is only one story, the Sonoran one. What happened in Yucatan was an entirely different story.

While resistance never did cease in Sonora, it was suspiciously lacking among those Yaquis deported to Yucatan. That is a strange thing to encounter when Yaquis are concerned. The Yucatecan sources rarely mention the Yaquis and when they do, it is mostly in cases of them having contracted Yellow Fever. Apart from those instances, Yaquis only appear in a few court cases. Such a almost complete silence seems out of place with the Yaquis – but then, the Yaqui deportees were out of place in Yucatan.

Hardly a trace can be found about the Yaquis on Yucatan and the largest part of the information available is due to the fact that a sizeable number of them at one time suffered from Yellow Fever.[33] Yucatecan officials were desperately trying to curb outbreaks of the much-feared disease, also known as the Black Vomit. So what can be found out about the lives of the Yucatecan Yoreme is mostly about sickness and death. What can be discovered is a far cry from what continued to take place in Sonora at the same time. In their native

33 The Yellow Fever is a disease contracted and spread through the bite of a mosquito. The first symptoms are fever, headaches, backaches, and nausea. The disease reduces the number of the white blood cells and causes hemorrhages. It is also known as Black Vomit ("vómito prieto") because the patients in an advanced stage of the disease start to bleed from the nose and mouth. In its final stage, the patient turns yellow.

Sonora, the Yoreme were troublemakers – but not in Yucatan. Had it not been for the Yellow Fever, they would have remained largely absent from the sources, something unimaginable for Sonora. And in the instances they do appear in other types of sources, generally in court records, the reasons are usually rather minor ones, generally "lesiones", bodily harm.[34] What is really curious about this is that in all of the cases found, more than just one Yaqui appears to be involved. Usually, they seem to be cases of Yaquis quarreling with other Yaquis, mostly in a state of drunkenness. It seems like they kept largely to themselves – and to drink – in their exile, even when it came to quarreling and fighting. It is these court cases that tell about the life of the deported Yoreme, that tell the Yucatecan story most clearly. A small but conclusive selection of these will now be examined.

In the case of Octaviano Bacasena [Bacasehua], a *hacienda* worker of eighteen years, it was a fight between him and his *compañeros de trabajo*, also presumably Yoreme.[35] Bacasena, a native of Alamos (Sonora) worked on the *hacienda* Cancachén, Augustín Matos [Matus?], the victim, was a servant "del señor ingeniero David Casares".[36] On October 17, 1907, around eight o'clock at night, Bacasena and three of his *compañeros* were drinking together. As the victim, Augustín Matos, recalled, they had been drinking together and talking to Antonio Valencia when something he, Matos, said caused Bacasena to get mad at him and to lash out with a bottle and hurt him. Octaviano Bacasena himself claimed that he thought Matos wanted to

34 The Court records are sometimes subdivided into criminal and civil cases. On the whole, the archive is still very disorganized. For "Justicia", there is no index and so that I had to limit my search to two sample years (1908 and 1912) for reasons of sheer magnitude of the documents to be examined for every year. 1908 was supposed to be the high point of the deportations, which had been going on for several years already. Thus the probability to find material was comparatively high. The second reason was the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910/11. Thus by 1912, changes should have manifested themselves in the sources. The names are given in the spelling found in the sources, with the correct spelling in brackets.

35 The identification of Yaquis can only be a tentative one, based on whatever information available, in this and the following cases primarily on names and places of origin.

36 AGEY, Fondo Justicia, 1908, caja 704. Later in the document, Bacasena is also called a servant of the finca Cancachén, of which Casares was the proprietor.

fight with yet another man, Villanueva, and that this was the reason why he went over to him. This was the only time the name Villanueva appears in the documentation. There may have been another, previously unmentioned person present or the writer may have confused the name of Antonio Valencia, who had also been present.[37] The fact remains that Bacasena stated Matos to have been drunk and that the latter had wanted to fight with someone, be this Valencia or Villanueva. According to his own statement Bacasena only wanted to intervene. The witnesses, Ignacio Molina and Antonio Valencia, did not throw any more light on the matter and just claimed to ignore the reason for the falling-out. In the end, Octaviano Bacasena was sentenced to 24 days of arrest and was to cover the costs of the trial.

In June of 1908, Francisca Loor Ségua received a sentence of 64 [69] days of arrest. A native of Hermosillo (Sonora), she by that time lived on the *hacienda* Fanil [Tanil] where she did "female work". Francisca was 40 or 44 years old and married. The document states that Francisca, the woman or maybe the wife *(mujer)* of José Salazar, was accused for bodily harming the *mujer* of a man named José María Mendoza.[38] The incident happened on the same *hacienda*, Fanil [Tanil], where they all lived. Again, we do have confusion about the names of one of the persons involved, probably because the typical Yaqui names sounded more than strange to Yucatecan ears. First, the defendant was referred to as Francisca Flores until she explicitly stated her name to be Francisca Loor Ségua. In the following, a veritable drama of love, hate, and jealousy between exiled Yoreme unfolded. The victim, Luz Yoqihua, reported that Francisca came to her house at ten o'clock in the morning and simply attacked her with a chisel. Luz cried for help and a female neighbor came to her aid. Francisca herself readily admitted to the attack and explained that it happened in revenge for a beating she herself had received from her husband a week before. In addition, her husband was having an affair with Luz Yoqihua, angering Francisca doubly. So she took the opportunity when she knew Luz to be home alone, "to give her what she deserved".[39] Luz' wounds were not grave. But what really spoke for

37 Parts of the documentation have been severely damaged by water and/or fungi destroying the paper.
38 AGEY, Fondo Justicia, 1908, caja 704.
39 "[…] le fue a dar su merecido"; AGEY, Fondo Justicia, 1908, caja 704.

Francisca was that Luz was suffering from a venereal disease which Francisca's husband had contracted through her and passed it on to his wife. Luz herself had been in such a bad condition on account of this disease that in May she had had to be hospitalized. This and the light character of the wounds inflicted on Luz were factors in favor of Francisca. The sentence eventually passed was 69 days of arrest. Because of good conduct, part of it was lifted.

While the court cases involving Yaquis are more than scarce with only two criminal offenses by Yoreme in 1908 – and one of them even with the crime having taken place in 1907 – two more can be found in 1912.[40] In both, the offense was bodily harm, in one instance committed by a man, in the other by a woman. And the people involved can clearly and without any doubt or the use of circumstantial evidence be identified as Yaquis.

The first appearance of Yoreme in a Yucatecan court in 1912 was about such a fight among two Yaquis. At the bottom of the occurrences in the month of May was the "jornalero yaqui" Miguel Buitimea, who had been attacked by his compatriot Fidencio Alvarado Fodo.[41] Buitimea was 40 years old, married, and from Magdalena (Sonora). He in 1912 worked and lived on the *finca* San Ignacio. Alvarado, his attacker, was 26, unmarried, originally from Tórin (Sonora) and residing on the same *hacienda*. Both men were drunk when they coincided. Alvarado was reported to have said "voy a chingar al yaqüi, voy a matarlo".[42] The two fought and Buitimea was knocked down. He claimed to have had no chance because he was intoxicated while Alvarado was sober. Apparently there were some bystanders but none known to Miguel Buitimea. The latter added that he believed Alvarado to have been fed up with the work for a while, "disgustado por trabajo".[43] In contrast to what Buitimea had told, Alvarado also admitted to having been under the influence. In any case, the fight resulted in Buitimea having the tip of his nose bitten off by Alvarado.

40 In addition to the criminal cases mentioned, there are four cases of orphaned Yaquis in 1908 and two in 1912.

41 AGEY, Justicia, 1912, caja 870.

42 Here, the statement is very ambiguous. It could also have been Buitimea making this utterance. In that case he would have initiated the fight himself and that probably would have resulted in a much shorter sentence for Alvarado.

43 AGEY, Justicia, 1912, caja 870.

The defendant claimed to remember nothing of the fight itself but that his wife had later told him about it. The court made an attempt at obtaining her for a statement but she seemed to have left the *finca.* Indeed, she may have been among those who left the *haciendas* in 1912, making their way to Mérida and presumably also to Progreso (Padilla Ramos 1995: 156). With all probability, these Yaquis, set free by the Revolution, were trying to escape the *fincas* and, maybe, to return to their native Sonora. Apparently, other Yaquis were also missing from the same *finca*.[44]. Alvarado was released from prison in August.

In the court proceedings against María de la Luz Flores, taking place in January of 1912, we have not only a case of Yaquis fighting among themselves but also of a couple quarreling. The whole affair puzzled the court so much, that it was investigated repeatedly. It was assumed that Luz had wounded her spouse with a knife but since she was also injured the investigators were doubtful about what had actually happened. The defendant, Luz, was a widow, originally from Sonora, and thirty years old. As it turned out in the course of the hearings, she had been living with the victim, Juan Fierros, for seven years, presumably always on the same *hacienda*, Tixnuc. Upon questioning, she stated that they had never legalized their relationship, which in the following was therefore referred to by the court as a "concubinato". Juan was 26, unmarried, and also from Sonora. Upon him, four large wounds had been inflicted and, when questioned, he stated that his spouse Luz had caused these. He claimed the weapon to have been an axe, not a knife, and the woman to have been drunk. He also said that there had been no falling-out with her and that he could not explain her behavior to himself. Luz, however, reported not to know who had attacked and wounded Juan. Since she had been completely drunk she could not remember anything. Luz and a friend had been drinking with another woman, who was clearly identified as Yaqui.

Several witnesses, neighbors and friends, were questioned, all of them Yaquis, but no one could throw any light on the matter. Consequently, Luz was questioned yet again and stated that Juan had hurt her a few days earlier, in an attempt to kill her with a knife. So the knife wounds were explained. Later on, both Juan and Luz seemed to

44 "Están fuera de la finca … los referidos yaquis"; AGEY, Justicia, 1912, caja 881.

have agreed that he had only wanted to scare and not to hurt or kill her. But, in an attempt to take the knife off him, she still had been injured. Once talking, she also reported that he had been speaking about leaving her and about going back "á su tierra" by himself. He had told her he did not want to be with her anymore. Finally, she also admitted that she did believe to have hurt him with the axe referred to earlier. She explained that when drunk, she always got very sad, cried, and remembered the children she had in Hermosillo and the one child who had died.

That along with the physical and emotional hurt Juan had caused her had finally brought her to the brink and, together with her intoxication, was the cause for attacking him. If the judge thought her story touching cannot be ascertained, neither can the penalty she received.[45] Luz was released from prison in March of 1912.

Especially the latter two cases are very revealing about the situation on the Yoreme faced on Yucatan. The work must have been very hard and the life probably equally unappealing. Many died. The deportees had hardly any contacts to other workers on the *haciendas*. This may have been due to the language barrier – as some of the Yoreme hardly spoke any Spanish, let alone Maya – or it could have been by choice. Maybe by isolating themselves they somehow tried to keep up their sense of identity. What is pretty obvious is the fact that even the fighting seems to have been limited to the exiled Yoreme, instead of against workers of other ethnicities or even the *hacendados* or their representatives.[46] The reasons for this isolation could well have been much more complex, too. Since there are virtually no documents from the deportees themselves, it will not be possible to ascertain what really went on. What the existing documents do tell us is that the Yaquis seem to have given up their struggle once they had been removed from their native Sonora, or better from their traditional territory and that they largely stuck to themselves. Only this explains the almost complete absence of other cases like riots or uprisings by Yaquis – as were typical for Sonora at the same time. Instead, many of the depor-

45 She may have benefited from his opinion that she did not profit from her deed, "no hubo ventaja por parte de la heridora". As in most cases, parts of the document have been destroyed; AGEY, Justicia, 1912, caja 881.

46 The exception being a brief outbreak of hostilities in 1911. See Raquel Padilla Ramos' forthcoming book.

tees seem to have sought refuge in alcohol, as the cases at hand prove. Still, they kept their sense of (ethnic) identity as becomes apparent from their clear self-identification as Yaquis, as found repeatedly in the sources.

Through the case of María de la Luz Flores we gain insights into the situation many Yoreme faced and learn how they might have felt. Luz is far removed from her home in Sonora. She was widowed, maybe through the ongoing guerilla fight in Sonora or even the very deportations. Her children were presumably still in Hermosillo and, quite naturally, she missed them unbearably, even though, or maybe because, she has been away from them for at least seven years. Another child of hers had apparently died and she still had not gotten over the loss. It seems like she had kept her sadness under control for the longest time but it resurfaced and overwhelmed her when her situation changes again drastically. With the revolution, changes were also brought to Yucatan and consequently many, maybe most, Yaquis left the *haciendas*, as becomes evident from the *boletines* of that time and from the case of Buitimea and Alvarado. And Luz' spouse, Juan, did also talk about leaving – leaving the state and leaving her. He wanted to return to Sonora and threatened her with not taking her along. Luz may or may not have loved Juan, but he had given her some security over the past years, a sense of belonging. All of a sudden she was faced with being abandoned and being alone once again, with losing what little she has retained without gaining anything in return. She may have feared that by herself she would never make it home and therefore never to see her children and her home again. All of this completely overwhelmed her when her defenses were lowered by alcoholic intoxication. And in this situation she did lose control and both she and Juan got hurt in the process. Yet for us this was a most fortunate occurrence since it prompted a court action and her to testify in the course of it. Thus Luz is one of the very few voices telling the Yucatecan story – a story very different from the Sonoran one. While some Sonoran Yoreme never stopped fighting, it seems like the deportees to Yucatan had ceased to do so.[47]

47 The possibility that struggled cannot be ruled out entirely. Minor matters were probably never known outside the haciendas.

So how come the Yaquis, ever troublesome in their native Sonora, ceased all their resistance upon their arrival in Yucatan? Unfortunately, there is no clear and conclusive explanation – only guesses. As Evelyn Hu-DeHart (1984: 205) has concluded: "Deportation created a new, much more severe kind of diaspora, which saw not only individual Yaquis flung farther afield than ever but communities and families torn apart as well, that caused the legendary Yaqui stamina finally to a near breaking point." Power and power relations need a base, an ideological and/or a more tangible one. This base lacked in Yucatan, along with feasible perspectives for the deportees and therefore the resistance could not be kept up. The will to resist came back with the possibility to go home to Sonora, when, after outbreak of Revolution, the Yaquis left the haciendas, hoping to return to their native land, trying to regain their base of power.

In Sonora, on the other hand, the deportations may even have given the Yaquis an additional incentive to fight – the demand that the deportees be returned – along with the traditional demand for autonomy.

Thus the question about the Yaquis' base of power is not an easy one to answer, especially since there is not much evidence to judge from. My guess would be that it was a combination of land and community, and religion from which the Yaquis derived their strength and their will to resist and to keep up the fight. This might explain why there is no single Yaqui story but different and differing ones.

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